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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Report of the Independent Expert on minority issues, Rita Izsák

Summary

The present report provides an update on the activities of the mandate holder since submission of her previous report. The Independent Expert includes a thematic discussion on "Ensuring the inclusion of minority issues in post-2015 development agendas". As momentum builds towards the shaping of new global development goals, addressing inequalities has emerged as a core area of discussion and consultation. This gives greater attention to the issues of women, those with disabilities, the elderly and vulnerable groups. However the Independent Expert considers that the issues of minorities remain relatively poorly reflected in the emerging discussions, both internationally and nationally. She urges greater and systematic attention to disadvantaged minorities who constitute hundreds of millions of the poorest and most socially and economically marginalized and excluded people globally.

The Independent Expert identifies the need for the new global development agenda to include specific goals relating to addressing inequality and promoting social inclusion, which include specific requirements and targets focused on activities to address the situations of disadvantaged minority groups. Human rights-based approaches to development are essential and must give greater attention to the promotion and protection of minority rights, which offers an important path to development for national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.

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I. Introduction

1. The mandate of the Independent Expert on minority issues was established by the Commission on Human Rights in 2005 (resolution 2005/79), and extended by Human Rights Council (resolution 7/6). On 24 March 2011, the Council decided to renew the mandate of the Independent Expert for an additional three years (resolution 16/6) and Rita Izsák was appointed mandate holder and assumed her functions on 1 August 2011. The Independent Expert is required, inter alia, to promote implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, including through consultation with Governments.

2. In chapter II of this report, the Independent Expert provides a brief overview of her activities since the submission of her previous report (A/HRC/22/49). In chapters III and IV she focuses on ensuring the inclusion of minority issues in post-2015 development agendas and chapter V provides a series of conclusions and recommendations.

II. Activities of the Independent Expert

A. Thematic activities and reports

1. Religious minorities

Participation in conferences and consultations

3. In her workplan presented in 2012 to the Council, the Independent Expert committed herself to pay particular attention to the rights of religious minorities in 2013 and beyond, recognizing the general lack of dedicated attention given to their minority rights beyond guaranteeing their freedom or religion or belief. The Independent Expert also recognized that this is a subject of considerable global interest and therefore decided to dedicate the sixth Forum on Minority Issues to the rights of religious minorities.

4. She sent a questionnaire to all Member States on 25 April 2013 on measures to ensure the rights and security of religious minorities. The questionnaire focused on the identification of positive practices for the protection and promotion of the rights of religious minorities, including initiatives in the area of interfaith dialogue and the promotion of harmonious relations between different faith groups. She thanks responding States including: Argentina, Austria, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, China, Cuba, Denmark, Estonia, Guatemala, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, and the United States of America.

5. On 6 June 2013, the Independent Expert convened an Expert Group Meeting "Beyond Belief: The rights and security of religious minorities" in Geneva. It was attended by national and international experts in the field of religious minority rights from different regions, including Heiner Bielefeldt, Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (via video-conference). The objective was to inform her report to be submitted to the General Assembly's sixty-eighth session. Expert speakers presented on issues that included: key concepts and standards; identification of challenges and violations, including non-discrimination, recognition and security; positive practices; the security of religious minorities in conflict and post-conflict situations; and strengthening responses to rights violations against religious minorities.

6. The Independent Expert presented her annual report to the General Assembly (A/68/268) at the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly on 23 October 2013. The report had a thematic focus on minority rights-based approaches to the protection and promotion of the rights of religious minorities. Therein, the Independent Expert highlighted the fact that the rights of religious minorities are poorly implemented in practice and in all regions they face discrimination, social exclusion, marginalization and often harassment, persecution and violence. The rights of religious minorities go beyond freedom of religion and belief. The wider group rights of religious minorities are frequently neglected by Governments. Minority rights require positive actions on the part of States based on the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. Legislation, policies and specific measures are required to create substantive equality in all areas of cultural, economic, political, public, religious and social life.

7. The Independent Expert acknowledges the important work of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and welcomes his 2013 report to the Council on religious minorities (A/HRC/22/51). On 28 October, she (together with the Special Rapporteur) was a panellist in a side event at the General Assembly organized by the Government of Canada, titled "International Efforts to Promote and Protect Freedom of Religion or Belief: Where Can The United Nations Play an Effective Role?"

2. Linguistic minorities

8. The Independent Expert's previous report to the Council (A/HRC/22/49) in 2013 discussed the rights of, and challenges experienced by, linguistic minorities. She highlighted the warning that half of the world's estimated 6,000 plus languages are under threat, and urged Governments to take necessary steps to protect minority communities and their language heritage (para. 39). She has continued to collect information on good practices from all regions relating to such issues as: threats to the existence of minority languages and linguistic minorities; recognition of minority languages and linguistic rights; minority languages in public life; minority languages in education, the media, public administration and judicial fields; and provision of information and services in minority languages.

9. On 13 March 2013, the Independent Expert convened a roundtable discussion on linguistic minorities with Member States, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), representatives of academia and linguistic minority communities, to identify initiatives that have proved successful in ensuring the rights of linguistic minorities. Over 60 participants shared their experiences and views, including regarding future possibilities for the work of United Nations mechanisms in the field of linguistic minority issues globally. In 2013, the Independent Expert began work to prepare a practical guide and a compilation of effective practices to assist policymakers and others. She plans to publish it online by mid-2014, following further consultation.

3. Minority women and girls

10. The Independent Expert participated in conferences on the issues of minority women and girls. She used her participation to raise awareness about mechanisms in the United Nations human rights system for the protection of women and how they can be used effectively, and to introduce the recommendations of the fourth session of the Forum on Minority Issues that focused on the rights of minority women and girls. She served as the General Rapporteur of the Fourth International Conference of Roma Women in Helsinki on 16 and 17 September 2013. The event discussed ways of improving the situation for individual women, their families and communities and the aims included developing

strategies for the protection of the rights of women, and improving networking between Roma women and other groups working for gender equality.

11. The Independent Expert attended an event on double discrimination against minority women, organized by the Club de Madrid,[1] on 1 and 2 October 2013. The meeting focused on women belonging to minority groups, and explored how they can transcend traditional roles to advance their rights and be empowered as agents of change. She spoke at the Hungarian Women's Congress in Budapest, organized by the Hungarian Women's Lobby. The Congress brought gender equality to the forefront of public discourse before parliamentary and local government elections and elections to the European Parliament to be held in 2014.

B. Country visits

12. The Independent Expert visited Cameroon between 2 and 11 September 2013 and thanks the Government for its excellent cooperation. With over 250 ethnic groups, the Government is rightly proud of the country's diversity and stability. While challenges remain, the Government appears willing to involve minorities in finding effective solutions. Pygmy and Mbororo pastoralist communities are among the poorest in Cameroon and issues relating to land and livelihood are of primary importance to these communities. Language issues include the decline of some of the country's many mother-tongue languages. While a national bilingual language policy exists, Anglophone representatives allege discrimination in such areas as access to employment and political appointments. Freedom of religion is generally evident; however, Pentecostal church leaders complained of closure of churches and discriminatory treatment. The report on the mission is contained in addendum 1 to the present report (A/HRC/25/56/Add.1).

13. The Independent Expert thanks the Government of Nigeria for agreeing to a visit during early 2014. She urges other States that she has requested to visit to respond positively to her. She draws attention to the press release of mandate holders on Human Rights Day calling for stronger cooperation of Member States.[2]

14. The Independent Expert travelled to Malaysia at the invitation of a human rights organization, Pusat KOMAS. She thanks all those civil society actors she met and with whom she held discussions. She also met high-level officials including ministers in the Prime Minister's Departments for National Unity and Integration and for Human Rights. During her meetings, she gave an introduction to international standards and principles for the protection of minority rights, discussed the importance of Malaysia ratifying the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the need for disaggregated data, especially for assessing the need for existing affirmative action policies. She highlighted to Government officials her desire visit Malaysia on an official mission and noted her long-standing visit request.

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[1] An independent non-profit organization composed of over 90 former Presidents and Prime Ministers from more than 60 countries.

[2] Available from www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14083&LangID=E.

C. Communications

15. The Independent Expert continues to receive information from diverse sources about human rights violations perpetrated against national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. Based on this information, she has sent communications in the form of letters of allegation and urgent action letters relating to minority issues to Member States over the reporting period, the majority sent jointly with other relevant mandates. These are made publicly available together with responses from concerned Governments in the joint s communications reports of the special procedures submitted to the Council.[3]

D. Additional activities

1. Strengthening collaborations

16. As follow-up to a recommendation made at the fifth Forum on Minority Issues, the Independent Expert attended the fifty-third session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Banjul, in April 2013. She held a consultation with the Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities in Africa and noted with appreciation its openness to engaging in further dialogue concerning minority issues. She addressed the NGO forum and advised civil society representatives about opportunities for cooperation with her mandate, the United Nations human rights system and the Forum on Minority Issues and encouraged Governmental and NGO representatives to attend future Forum sessions.

17. The Independent Expert encouraged the Commission to look into options for dedicating specific attention to minority issues and ensuring that minority concerns are addressed in a systematic way. On 11 April 2013, she issued a press statement warning that hundreds of minority groups across Africa are in dire need of strengthened attention and protection.[4] She intends to continue her engagement with the Commission and African regional human rights actors and produce a report on minority issues in the African region.

18. The Independent Expert held consultations with the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, to identify ways in which their respective mandates might strengthen their collaboration in the area of prevention of genocide and mass atrocities. She invited Mr. Dieng to attend the Forum on Minority Issues and deliver a keynote speech in which he recognized that populations are often targeted based on their identity or religious belief and expressed concern over religious and sectarian tensions in the Central African Republic, Egypt, Myanmar and the Syrian Arab Republic.

19. The Independent Expert continued her collaboration with the newly established United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities, which is coordinated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). She also continued to contribute to the global consultations on the post-2015 development agenda and submitted two papers on the consultations about inequalities and about good governance. On 5 December 2013, the Independent Expert participated as a panellist in an event held in Geneva to mark Human Rights Day and the twentieth anniversary of OHCHR.

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[3] For the latest report, see A/HRC/25/74.

[4] Available from www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13220&LangID=E.

2. Events, conferences and outreach

20. On 14 and 15 May 2013, the Independent Expert participated in the conference "Right-wing Extremism and Hate Crime: Minorities under Pressure in Europe and Beyond" in Oslo. She spoke about the importance of early action to confront hateful messages. In November, she joined the Sixth Budapest Human Rights Forum as a panellist on issues of freedom of religion and belief. She contributed to several meetings via video messages, including: on 6 March 2013, a meeting organized by the European Union delegation to the United Nations in Geneva addressing freedom of religion or belief for all; on 10 December, the Regional Ministerial Education Conference co-organized by the Ministry of National Education of Turkey and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States on the theme of including all children in quality learning.

21. The Independent Expert has continued to raise awareness about discrimination on the basis of work and descent. On 24 May 2013, she led a joint statement calling for strengthened protection of more than 260 million victims of caste-based discrimination.[5] On 16 and 17 December 2013, she participated in the Second South Asia Regional Consultation on Caste Based Discrimination in Kathmandu. The objective was to explore contemporary caste-based discrimination issues in the region, as well as to discuss United Nations action to combat such discrimination in country programmes.

22. The Independent Expert enhanced efforts to reach out to young people belonging to minorities. She gave lectures and presentations to youth and student groups (among others at the Central European University in Budapest and Fordham Law School in New York) and participated in youth events, including a youth festival in Hungary, to discuss minorities and hate speech. She met and participated in the closing of the OHCHR Minority Fellowship Programme and as a former fellow herself, encouraged other fellows to take up leadership roles.

23. On 25 November 2013, prior to the session of the Forum on Minority Issues, the Independent Expert hosted a public event "How can you fight hate and intolerance?" The event included the screening of short films from the project "Not in Our Town", focused on how different communities have mobilized to confront hatred and intolerance. This well-attended event and discussion presented positive examples of how individuals and communities can take practical action and generated an interesting dialogue and personal reflections from participants. The Independent Expert plans to host a similar event on an annual basis.

24. The Independent Expert used social media, including Facebook and Twitter, to raise awareness of minority issues and the work of her mandate and other relevant international bodies and mechanisms. These social media sites also provided a platform for discussion of minority issues. Notably, the debate on a Dutch cultural tradition of Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet was followed by some 13,000 people on her Facebook page within just a few days and resulted in around 500 comments and messages being sent to the Independent Expert directly on this matter.

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[5] Available from www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13352&LangID=E.

3. Statements

25. The Independent Expert issued additional public statements, many jointly with other mandates, to highlight issues of concern involving minorities.[6] These included: on 29 March, calling on all parties in Bangladesh to cease violence, including against the Hindu minority, following large-scale protests across the country in February 2013; on 8 April, a statement to mark International Roma Day, calling for political and legislative commitments to be implemented in practice to bring much needed changes into the lives of Roma; on 4 May, she initiated a joint statement calling for greater protection of people living with albinism, recognizing that their lifelong stigmatization and marginalization is extreme and noting concern over attacks against them; on 13 May, calling on the Iranian authorities for the immediate release of seven Baha'i leaders nearing the fifth anniversary of their arrests, whose detentions were declared arbitrary by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in 2008.

26. On 29 October, the Independent Expert issued a statement "Roma in Europe: Guilty until proven innocent?" relating to the removal of children from their Roma families and accusations of child abduction against Roma by authorities and the media. On 21 November, a statement was issued regarding the Dutch celebrations of the arrival of Sinterklaas and his servant, Zwarte Piet (Black Pete), which perpetuates negative stereotypes of Africans and people of African descent. The Government was urged to support and facilitate an open debate in Dutch society by establishing a dedicated platform for this discussion, with a view to identify steps that might respond to the views and concerns of all. On 25 November a statement related to a decision of the Government of Malaysia to ban a Catholic publication from using the word 'Allah' to refer to God, warning that it violates the rights of religious minorities. On 19 December, a statement on Central African Republic urged all sides to step back from the brink of all-out sectarian conflict and an immediate and unconditional halt to the violence and attacks against civilians.

E. Update on the Forum on Minority Issues

27. The Independent Expert is required in resolution 19/23 of March 2012 to guide the sessions of the Forum on Minority Issues, prepare its annual meetings and to report its recommendations to the Council. On 26 and 27 November 2013, the sixth annual session of the Forum took place in Geneva with a thematic focus on guaranteeing the rights of religious minorities.

28. More than 500 delegates participated, representing Member States from all regions, United Nations mechanisms, treaty bodies and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations, regional organizations, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations and including academics and experts on minority issues. Interventions addressed the many challenges facing religious minorities, provided information about legislation, policies and practices for the protection of their rights, and presented proposals for solutions to problems experienced by religious minorities. Recommendations for guaranteeing the rights of religious minorities emanating from the Forum will be presented to the Council at its twenty-fifth session.

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[6] Links to the Independent Expert's press releases can be found on her webpage, www.ohchr.org/en/issues/minorities/iexpert/pages/ieminorityissuesindex.aspx.

29. The Independent Expert participated as a panellist in a number of side events that were held during the Forum, including one event hosted by Adama Dieng, Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, on the theme of "Prevention of Incitement to Atrocity Crimes". Other Side-Events included one focused on religious minorities in the Middle East and North African Region, and "Gender Justice and Religion: Women as Agents of Positive Change", which examined the challenges facing women belonging to religious minorities and their role in fostering intercommunity tolerance and dialogue.

III. Ensuring the inclusion of minority issues in post-2015 development agendas

Introduction

30. The following thematic discussion forms part of an ongoing programme of work by the Independent Expert to ensure that minority issues are given appropriate attention in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. She will continue to consult widely on this issue with all relevant stakeholders at the global and national level to achieve this objective.

31. There are compelling arguments for giving greater attention to disadvantaged minorities in post-2015 development agenda and future development goals. Foremost amongst these is that globally minorities remain among the poorest and most socially and economically excluded and marginalized communities. Tens of millions of people belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities worldwide are trapped in a cycle of discrimination, exclusion, poverty and underdevelopment from which they cannot break free without targeted attention being given to their situations. The relationship between inequality, discrimination and poverty and its impact on disadvantaged minority groups cannot be ignored or underestimated.

32. As highlighted by the former Independent Expert, poverty within minority communities is both a cause and a manifestation of the diminished rights, opportunities and social advancement available to the members of minority communities. Their poverty involves more than just a lack of income or a daily struggle for basic sustenance and is frequently based on structural inequality and long-standing discrimination and social exclusion which defy "one-size-fits-all" solutions. Poor minority communities are less able to participate effectively in political decision-making. They suffer from unequal access to education, health care, employment and land. Minorities are more likely to lack citizenship and be stateless, often resulting in their total exclusion from development and human rights initiatives.

33. In fact, as 2015 approaches, many persons belonging to minorities are at risk of backsliding in development and human rights terms. For example, the impact of the global financial crisis is most deeply felt by the poorest in society, including minorities, who may lack secure employment and face shrinking social welfare platforms. Recent or ongoing conflicts have had a devastating impact on minorities in numerous countries. Religious minorities are under threat in countries where conflict or political and social unrest has emerged, including the "Arab Spring" States, leading many to flee their homes or become refugees in neighbouring States.

34. An emerging message underlying the consultations around the post-2015 development agendas has been "leave no one behind". This message is a welcome one that indicates a growing global awareness that inequality greatly hampers development progress for those affected. The Independent Expert considers that a real risk exists that millions of disadvantaged minorities globally will be "left behind" if there is not a clear commitment at the global and national levels to address the development needs and human rights of

disadvantaged minorities. New development goals for the post-2015 period provide an important opportunity to refocus development agendas on inequality and put minority issues at the heart of these efforts.

35. In many national situations, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have not been achieved for disadvantaged minorities. A full analysis of experiences is still needed in order for lessons to be fully learned from the MDG experience. In some countries, positive examples have emerged where practices have been implemented and targeted strategies have produced positive results for minorities. However, a survey by the former Independent Expert on minority issues, Gay McDougall, demonstrated that only a handful of countries devoted particular attention to minorities in their MDG reports, that, even where minorities are mentioned, there is a lack of discussion on how and, crucially, why minorities are experiencing disproportionately high levels of poverty and other serious inequalities, and that women belonging to minority groups remain particularly invisible (see A/HRC/4/9, para. 68).

36. Deficiencies in the MDG framework have been highlighted by minority rights and development experts.[7] A reliance on aggregate results and a continuing lack of disaggregated data collection resulted in very few measurements being made of the progress of minority groups towards the goals. Governments have tended to focus attention on populations that are easiest to reach and issues that were easiest and least costly to address. Minorities are often geographically and socially harder to reach and their issues include long-standing discrimination and social exclusion, which are more difficult to address. Strategies consequently often failed to target minorities and their particular challenges, even where the political will to address the issues of minorities existed.

37. Research suggests that minorities and indigenous peoples have progressed at a slower rate and even found gaps between them and other communities widening as others benefited from MDG interventions. An issues brief on promoting equality, including social equity, co-authored by UNICEF, UN-Women, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and OHCHR, stated: "The MDGs, in focusing largely on national averages, without addressing inequalities explicitly, may have led to perverse outcomes whereby already-marginalized groups have tended to be 'left until last', thus exacerbating existing inequalities."[8]

38. OHCHR and mechanisms and mandates of the Council have consistently emphasized that human rights must be at the heart of development processes and that human rights-based approaches to development, based on the normative framework of human rights law, strengthen development strategies. This message is increasingly being taken up by other stakeholders, including Member States that acknowledge the relationship between human rights and development. It must not be forgotten that human rights include minority rights, as established in article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.

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[7] See, for example, Corinne Lennox, "Addressing health inequalities in the post-2015 development framework" in *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2013* (London, 2013, Minority Rights Group International), pp. 10 ff.

[8] Available from http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2406TST%20Issues%20Brief%20on%20Promoting%20Equality_FINAL.pdf.

39. In September 2013, Amnesty International called for human rights-based approaches and attention to minorities in the post-2015 development agenda. It stated that world leaders risk deepening inequalities, discrimination and injustice if human rights remain sidelined. "The poorest, most disadvantaged and marginalized groups are being let down" said its Secretary General, Salil Shetty: "There is a widening gap between rich and poor and between men and women and those from minority groups." The MDGs and the post-2015 agenda must directly address factors causing inequality and must address and dismantle the multiple and systemic barriers which marginalize the most vulnerable.[9]

40. Since 2012, a consultation process has been taking place internationally to put in place a new global development plan when the MDGs conclude in 2015. Important processes have been under way, including the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and the intergovernmental Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, connected to the Rio+20 process. The General Assembly met in September 2013 to review progress, begin discussion of the recommendations and start work on a new framework to follow the MDGs. Emerging from this process is a strong call for attention to the most marginalized and disadvantaged groups.

41. The Rio+20 outcome document[10] highlights the fact that green economy policies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication should "enhance the welfare of indigenous peoples and their communities, other local and traditional communities, and ethnic minorities, recognizing and supporting their identity, culture and interests and avoid endangering their cultural heritage, practices and traditional knowledge" (para. 58). It also stresses the need to ensure equal access to education for ethnic minorities and for an enabling environment for women and girls from ethnic minorities (paras. 229 and 238). The High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons, in its report, states: "We should ensure that no person — regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race or other status — is denied universal human rights and basic economic opportunities. We should design goals that focus on reaching excluded groups".[11]

42. The Secretary-General established the United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda in September 2011, which brings together experts from over 50 United Nations entities and international organizations to support the post-2015 consultation process. In its report, *Addressing inequalities: The heart of the post-2015 agenda and the future we want for all*, it states that: "the era of the MDGs may have inadvertently seen some channeling of resources away from the poorest population groups or from those that are already at a disadvantage because of the effects of discrimination based on their gender, ethnicity, disability or residence … Redressing such discrimination and inequalities will be essential, if global opportunities for progress are to be shared by those most in need of its benefits."[12]

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[9] "UN Millennium Development Goals: Human rights must not be marginalized in post-2015 agenda", 23 September 2013.

[10] Available from www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/727The%20Future%20We%20Want%2019.pdf.

[11] United Nations, *A New Global Partnership : Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development – The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda* (New York, 2013), executive summary.

[12] Available from www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Think%20Pieces/10_inequalities.pdf.

43. The United Nations system has increased its attention to minority issues. In 2012, the Secretary-General established the United Nations network on racial discrimination and the protection of minorities in Policy Committee decision No. 2012/4 of 6 March 2012. It aims to enhance dialogue and cooperation across the United Nations system. In the guidance note of the Secretary-General on racial discrimination and protection of minorities based on the network's work, it is stated that: "efforts to improve sustainable human development and promote inclusion and stability are complemented and strengthened with better attention to the situation of minorities ... participation of persons belonging to minorities is essential in the process of developing the post-2015 development agenda, with a view to ensuring that the resulting agenda advances non-discrimination and other human rights concerns of minorities."[13]

44. United Nations Country teams supported 88 countries to convene national consultations on the post-2015 development agenda and hold forums to exchange ideas for a shared vision of "The World We Want", in an open process tailored to country contexts.[14] The national consultations made deliberate efforts to engage groups that generally do not participate in policy discussions. This global conversation responds to a growing call for active participation in the process and calls for the voices and issues of disadvantaged groups, including minorities, to be taken into account at every stage. Submissions to the Global Consultation on Addressing Inequalities were revealing and emphasized the extent to which globally ethnic and linguistic minorities face structural exclusion that limits integration into society.

45. The United Nations Development Group organized a set of eleven thematic consultations, on the themes of: conflict and fragility; education; environmental sustainability; governance; growth and employment; health; hunger, food and nutrition; inequalities; population dynamics; energy; and water. A report and preliminary findings were launched in March 2013. The following sections provide a brief discussion of minority issues in the context of each of these thematic areas.

IV. Minorities in the context of specific areas of development consultation

A. Inequalities

46. Tackling inequality stands out among the consultation areas as a cross-cutting and essential goal that should be at the heart of international and national development agendas. To make progress on this goal for disadvantaged minority groups and others means to create conditions of substantive equality for minorities, the challenges to which are a major barrier to development and human rights that minorities experience. A requirement for States to address inequality means that they must act clearly and directly to address the social exclusion, economic marginalization, poverty and discrimination facing minority communities.

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[13] Available from www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/GuidanceNoteRacialDiscriminationMinorities.pdf.

[14] See www.worldwewant2015.org/sitemap.

47. A global-level commitment to tackle inequality and address the situation of disadvantaged minorities and indigenous peoples by the international community, the United Nations, the donor community and international financial institutions is essential to encourage and ensure State-level action. If such a global message is missing or weakly stated, States that have historically neglected, denied or violated the rights and development of marginalized minority groups will have little incentive to do otherwise. Conversely, a strong requirement to address inequality, clearly articulated in a new set of post-2015 development imperatives, will serve to mobilize State action, empower civil society and minority communities, and have the potential to ensure real change on the ground for some of the most impoverished and marginalized minority groups.

48. While the increasing focus on "inequality" is welcome and vital, it is essential that this translates into far greater attention to minority issues in practice in every State. It is essential not only to address the challenges of "the poor", but to identify who are the poorest, where and why — to find the inequality where it is gravest. A deeper understanding of the inequalities which lie behind poverty, social exclusion and economic marginalization is necessary if nationally and internationally we are to overcome the barriers to development experienced by disadvantaged minorities.

49. Discussions on the post-2015 agenda must take into account evidence that indicates that a rapidly increasing proportion of the world's poor are minority groups. In many situations globally, in both developing and developed countries, poverty takes on ethnic, religious and linguistic dimensions. An honest assessment of why minority groups face more severe challenges reveals that discrimination and exclusion form a launching pad for a host of obstacles for minorities. At the national level, long-term success in poverty reduction and in reaching development targets for minorities requires an investment in tackling the root causes of inequality, as well as its symptoms.

50. In core documents emerging from the consultations on the post-2015 agenda, there is little, if any, recognition that minorities experience multiple and intersectional challenges that create vulnerability across a range of areas under consideration. For example, a focus on rural/urban disparities fails to acknowledge that minorities are frequently rural and remote communities with poor access to services and basic needs. Consideration of household wealth disparities rarely makes the link between low income and belonging to a minority. It is often women from disadvantaged minorities who are most affected by poor access to education and decent employment and who suffer multiple discrimination as they are women, members of a minority and poor. When the maps of poverty, access to basic services, gender discrimination, poor housing and population groups are overlaid, minorities stand out as being the most in need. The nexus between minorities, poverty and inequality cannot be ignored.

51. Minority groups have experienced increased levels of racism and xenophobia since the financial crisis began. The 2012 Annual Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance noted that: "The ongoing economic crisis has created a vicious cycle in which many of the groups of concern to ECRI (vulnerable groups) are trapped. Diminished economic opportunities and welfare cuts puts them into poverty, which breeds negative feelings on both sides of the social divide".[15]

[15] Annual Report on ECRI's Activities covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2012, CRI(2013)42, para. 2. Available from www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Library/PressReleases/146-2013_10_25_AnnualReport2012_en.asp.

52. Calls for inequality to be addressed more clearly are coming from a wide group of experts. On 21 May 2013 a group of 18 United Nations human rights mandate holders called for the post-2015 development agenda to be urgently refocused on equality, social protection and accountability.[16] The statement highlighted that:

> The rise of inequality has severely undermined the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals … Future goals must be sensitive to who benefits and at whose expense, and must go beyond blunt, aggregate targets that allow us to pick the "low-hanging fruit" and ignore the most vulnerable groups, while leaving systemic injustices untouched … Making equality a cross-cutting priority would mean every new goal will confront head on the systemic injustices that drive inequalities, from institutional discrimination against minority groups to uneven investments in social services in different regions of a country.

The importance of disaggregated data

53. A major barrier in assessing and tackling disparities is the lack of data disaggregated by ethnicity, religion or language. Data is vitally important for effective poverty reduction and yet, within aid modalities on poverty, the collection of ethno-cultural disaggregated data is not uniformly supported. In 2005, UNDP published *MDG Monitoring and Reporting: A Review of Good Practices*, wherein it recommends that, "Whenever possible, disaggregated data should be used to highlight disparities across gender, ethnicity, geographical location, age or other dimensions of inequality".[17] In a few countries where disaggregated data exist, these reflect clearly the inequalities between majority and minority groups. Equally, they provide essential baseline data upon which to base targeted interventions and monitor progress. Each of the countries mentioned below has, to some extent, recognized the challenges facing minorities revealed by such data and established programmes targeted towards them.

54. In the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, disaggregated data reveal patterns of ethnic poverty. Around two fifths of people from ethnic minorities live in income poverty, twice the rate for whites. The highest income poverty rates (in percentages) are found among Bangladeshis (65), Pakistanis (55) and black Africans (45). At 25–30 per cent, the rate among Indians and black Caribbeans is lower but still much higher than the 20 per cent among white people.[18] In Brazil, census data show that on average, white and Asian Brazilians earned twice as much as black or mixed-race Brazilians. Black Brazilians are much more likely to be poor. Of the 16.2 million people living in extreme poverty (approximately 8.5 per cent of the population), 70.8 per cent are black. The average wages for black and mixed-race Brazilians are 2.4 times lower than those earned by citizens of white and Asian origin.[19]

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[16] Press release, "Equality or bust for post-2015 global development goals – UN rights experts", Geneva, 21 May 2013. Available from www.ohchr.org/SP/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13342&LangID=E.

[17] Poverty Reduction Group, UNDP Bureau for Development Policy, 2005, p. 18.

[18] Peter Kenway and Guy Palmer, New Policy Institute, *Poverty among ethnic groups: how and why does it differ?* (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York, 2007), p. 11. Available from www.poverty.org.uk/reports/ethnicity.pdf.

[19] See http://globalvoicesonline.org/2011/11/29/brazil-census-black-mixed-population/

55. Analysis by the Pew Research Center of census data in the United States[20] shows the wealth gap between whites and minorities continued to grow since 1984 when the census began tracking such data. White households have on average 20 times the median wealth of blacks and 18 times that of Hispanics. The recession from late 2007 to mid-2009 took a far greater toll on the wealth of minorities than whites. From 2005 to 2009, inflation-adjusted median wealth fell by 66 per cent among Hispanic households and 53 per cent among black households, compared with just 16 per cent among white households. As a result the typical black household had just $5,677 in wealth (assets minus debts) in 2009; the typical Hispanic household had $6,325 in wealth; and the typical white household had $113,149.

56. The World Bank has highlighted the "remarkable progress" of Viet Nam on poverty reduction. However, ethnic minorities — 15 per cent of the population — have not enjoyed such progress. In 1993, minorities comprised 20 per cent of all poor households. By 1998, this had risen to 29 per cent, and by 2010 to 47 per cent, and 68 per cent of the extreme poor. The gap in living standards is also large: 66.3 per cent of ethnic minorities were still poor in 2010 compared to only 12.9 per cent of the majority Kinh, and 37.4 per cent of ethnic minorities are still extremely poor, compared to just 2.9 per cent of Kinh.[21] The World Bank describes six "pillars of disadvantage" that combine in a "vicious cycle" to influence ethnic minority livelihood outcomes and lead directly and indirectly to persistent poverty: lower levels of education; less mobility; less access to financial services; less productive, lower-quality land; limited market access; stereotyping and cultural barriers.[22]

57. One criticism that must be addressed is that a focus on any population group or minority may be perceived of as unfair affirmative action or special measures that result in a neglect of other population groups who may also have very real issues and development challenges. However, this need not be the case. An approach which addresses the long-standing issues of disadvantaged minorities as a core priority does not assume or require neglect of other groups or essential areas of concern. It requires that such targeted attention is justified, monitored and time-bound to ensure that it does not become discriminatory. Disaggregated data is also essential in this regard and allows inequalities to be statistically demonstrated, and progress towards targets to be monitored and evaluated.

58. Addressing inequality is an overarching goal that, if it is achieved, will inevitably bring with it benefits for disadvantaged minority groups across a wide range of other areas that the post-2015 development agenda consultations are addressing. The rationale behind such an inequalities-based approach is strong, however it must be driven at a global and donor level to overcome barriers of discrimination, power-dynamics, and lack of political will that are often evident at the national level. In the Synthesis Report of the Global Thematic Public Consultation on the Post-2015 Development Agenda focusing on inequalities,[23] it is stated that "there is considerable evidence that inequalities in one structural domain increase the likelihood of inequalities in others. In the event of opportunity for improvements in one domain, the chances of progress are often undermined

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[20] Rakesh Kochhar, Richard Fry and Paul Taylor, "Wealth Gaps Rise to Record Highs Between Whites, Blacks, Hispanics: Executive Summary", 26 July 2011. Available from www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/07/26/wealth-gaps-rise-to-record-highs-between-whites-blacks-hispanics.

[21] World Bank, *Well Begun, Not Yet Done: Vietnam's Remarkable Progress on Poverty Reduction and the Emerging Challenges* (Hanoi, 2012), p. 5. Available from http://documents.worldbank.org.

[22] Ibid., p. 122.

[23] Available from www.worldwewant2015.org/file/299198/download/324584.

or rendered inaccessible by simultaneous intersecting disadvantage in another. These intersecting and mutually reinforcing inequalities are often rooted in historical relationships, and continue to be reproduced through discrimination in social, economic, environmental and political domains."

B. Education

59. Education is a basic human right for all children, and yet in all regions there are minority children who do not enjoy that right or enjoy it to a much lesser extent than others. Often countries face serious problems in providing basic education for many children owing to factors including scarcity of resources, poverty and conflict. However the challenges and barriers to minority children are frequently based on and perpetuated by discrimination and social exclusion. Lack of access to education perpetuates a cycle of poverty that is often experienced most acutely by minority communities. Yet conversely, education provides a gateway to development and the full enjoyment of a wide array of human rights for minorities.

60. In 2009, of the world's 101 million children out of school, an estimated 50–70 per cent were from minorities or indigenous peoples.[24] In Central Africa, the great majority of Batwa and Baka have not had access even to primary education. Only 13 per cent of children in sub-Saharan Africa have access to primary education in their mother tongue.[25] In South Asia, Dalit girls are prevented from pursuing their education not only because of poverty, but through discrimination and sexual violence. Literacy levels are commonly much lower among Dalit girls. For example, in the Mushahar Dalit community in India, barely 9 per cent of women are literate.[26] In Latin America, millions of indigenous and African descendant children work in fields, plantations or mines instead of being in school.

61. As a result of factors including segregation, stigmatization, and high dropout rates among Roma, their attendance beyond primary school is dramatically lower than the average. In South-East Europe only 18 per cent of Roma attend secondary school, compared with 75 per cent of the population, and less than 1 per cent of Roma attend university.[27] In many countries globally, education is only in the national or majority language leaving linguistic minorities disadvantaged. In Viet Nam and other South-East Asian countries, education is commonly only in the language of the majority putting minorities at a disadvantage in education.

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[24] Minority Rights, "Millions of European children still denied an education – new global report", 16 July 2009. Available from www.minorityrights.org/7967/press-releases/millions-of-european-children-still-denied-an-education-new-global-report.html.

[25] UNDP, *Human Development Report 2004* (New York): p. 34, figure 2.4.

[26] International Dalit Solidarity Network, recommendations on Dalits' access to education, submitted to the Forum on Minority Issues, 2008, para. 83. Available from http://idsn.org/fileadmin/user_folder/pdf/New_files/UN/IDSN_Forum_on_Minorities.pdf.

[27] Expert paper prepared by UNICEF on Ending discrimination against Roma children, in Council of Europe report "Ending discrimination against Roma children" (http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/XrefViewPDF.asp?FileID=19545&Language=EN).

C. Health

62. According to Paul Hunt, former Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (2002–2008):

> We live in a world of profound health inequalities, a world in which a person's health and the quality of care they receive is determined by their ethnicity, the language they speak or their religious and cultural beliefs. In almost every country in the world, minorities and indigenous peoples are among the poorest and most vulnerable groups, suffer greater ill-health and receive poorer quality of care than other segments of the population. They die younger, suffer from higher rates of disease and struggle more to access health services compared to the rest of the population. More often than not, this ill-health and poor healthcare is a symptom of poverty and discrimination.[28]

63. Minorities frequently live in remote or inaccessible localities and often Government health-care facilities and provision do not reach there. In many countries, the health-care infrastructure, including hospitals or clinics, is simply not available in minority areas. In some cases, health-care provision comes at a cost relating to treatment and drugs that poor communities — often minority communities — cannot afford. The infrastructure to ensure safe drinking water and hygiene facilities may also not reach areas where minorities live. In some cases the provision of health care is also limited due to discrimination. New attention to minorities and strategies to address their health situations are urgently required. A greater understanding of their health needs is essential and requires research and data collection.

64. In Nepal, according to UNDP, life expectancy of a Hill Dalit was 61 in 2009 compared to 68 for a higher caste Hill Brahmin. A 2011 Open Society Foundation study reported that Roma are disproportionately unvaccinated, have poorer than average nutrition and experience higher rates of infant mortality and tuberculosis. There is evidence that life expectancy among Roma communities is 10 to 15 years lower than in non-Roma communities.[29] In Cameroon, visited by the Independent Expert in 2013, the access to health and health situation of Pygmy communities is extremely poor relative to other population groups. In Pakistan, UNICEF reports that the maternal mortality ratio for Baluchistan — largely inhabited by the Baluchi minority — is 758 per 100,000 live births, almost three times the national average of 276 per 100,000 and far from the MDG target of 140 per 100,000.[30]

D. Growth and employment

65. Economic exclusion is a cause, a manifestation and a consequence of discrimination against minorities. As was strongly emphasized at the World Conference against Racism in Durban in 2001, poverty can contribute to the persistence of racist attitudes and practices, which in turn generate more poverty, a situation coined as the "vicious cycle of poverty".

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[28] Minority Rights, *State of the World's Minorities*, p. 7.

[29] See http://web.ua.es/en/actualidad-universitaria/2013/septiembre2013/septiembre2013-23-30/life-expectancy-in-roma-communities-is-10-15-years-less-than-that-of-those-in-non-roma-communities.htm

[30] Fatima Raja, *Pakistan: Annual Report 2011* (UNICEF Pakistan, 2012). Available from www.unicef.org/pakistan/Annual_Report_2011.pdf.

Many minorities have historically been excluded from full and effective participation in economic life, both in the developed and developing world. Minorities face discrimination when they seek employment due to their colour, religion, language or names. Minorities are poorly represented even in public-sector employment, including where legislation bans discrimination in public and private sectors. They may face barriers in accessing credit or loans and may live in the poorest or remote regions that offer limited prospects for their economic development. Large-scale economic development projects or commercial activities carried out on the lands where minorities live frequently have negative impacts, including displacement, perpetuation of poverty and, in some cases, violence.

66. Several factors exacerbate the exclusion of minorities, including deteriorating economic conditions, ethnic tensions and rising discrimination. Unequal regional distribution of resources and services and a lack of basic infrastructure in regions where minorities live often have the effect of preventing them from fully exercising their economic and social rights. The past decade has brought new and unanticipated challenges, including the global food and economic crises that have been proven to have a greater impact on particular vulnerable groups and minorities. Failing to fully include and integrate minorities also means that States are missing out on economic developments and benefits that such inclusion brings. World Bank studies have shown how the inclusion of currently marginalized and excluded minorities in economic life would lead to increased GDP.[31]

E. Hunger, food security and nutrition

67. Directly linked to health concerns, minorities are frequently in a vulnerable situation in regard to hunger, food security and nutrition. High levels of poverty and extreme poverty, lack of access to employment or secure forms of income, land or land tenure all impact on their food security. In India, for example, child malnutrition is some 14–20 per cent higher for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and has been declining at a slower rate than for the rest of the populations over the period of the MDGs.[32] In country visits by the mandate holders to Rwanda (2011) and Cameroon (2013), food security and nutrition was a major concern of Batwa and Pygmy communities, many of whom are displaced from traditional forest habitats and can no longer maintain their hunter/gather lifestyles and access forest-based food sources.

F. Conflict and fragility

68. Globally, minorities often suffer disproportionately from the impact of conflict. Many examples demonstrate clearly the impact of conflict upon minorities and their development and rights, which in some cases has been devastating and has set progress towards development goals back by years for certain groups.

69. The huge impact of conflict and instability on minorities in Iraq has been documented, including for Muslim minorities, Baha'is, Christians, Armenians, Chaldo-Assyrians, Faili Kurds, Palestinians, Jews, Sabian Mandaeans, Yazidis and others. Minority

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[31] See, for example, "Economic costs of Roma exclusion". Available from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTROMA/Resources/Economic_Costs_Roma_Exclusion.pdf.

[32] Thorat, S. and Sabharwal, N.S., Addressing the unequal burden of malnutrition', *India Health Beat*, vol. 5, No. 5 (June 2011), p. 1. (Cited from Lennox, *Addressing health inequalities*.)

Rights Group states that: "Minorities in Iraq have continued to be targeted on the grounds of their religion or ethnicity since the US-led invasion and fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003. They have suffered from killings, kidnappings, torture, harassment, forced conversions and the destruction of homes and property."[33] Persecution, human rights violations and targeted attacks have led to vast numbers of internally displaced persons and a mass exodus of minority communities to neighbouring countries, where they continue to experience severe challenges and poverty. Equally, in Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic, the full extent of unrest and conflict on minorities is becoming evident and has far-reaching implications for their rights and security.

70. In Rakhine State in Myanmar, conflict between the Rakhine Buddhists and Muslim Rohingya communities erupted in 2012 and resulted in the killing of hundreds, the destruction of homes and property and the internal displacement of over 130,000 people, mostly minority Muslims. Tens of thousands of displaced people, and many thousands of others in villages affected by the conflict and insecurity, now have no access to livelihood activities or income, are dependent on humanitarian assistance for food, shelter, health care, education and water and sanitation. The conflict has had a catastrophic impact on their rights, access to essential services and development, forcing many into a condition of extreme poverty and insecurity. The Government of Myanmar does not recognize the Rohingya as citizens with implications for their enjoyment of all their human rights.

G. Environmental sustainability

71. According to the report of the United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda: "Deepening resilience among vulnerable populations and reducing risks of disasters and other shocks must be central to limiting the social and economic costs of disasters, in terms of death, hunger, malnutrition, displacement and forced migration."[34] Equally, Claus H. Sorensen, Director-General of the European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection stated:

> Those who are most vulnerable and marginalised need primary attention when a disaster strikes, both because the impact of the disaster is likely to be higher on them than others, and because of the likelihood that they find themselves excluded from response and recovery efforts. By systematically addressing in each action the inclusion of those who are marginalised (in particular, persons affected by caste discrimination, minorities, as well as persons with disabilities, women, and the elderly), lives have been saved, the suffering of those in need has been alleviated, and their dignity protected.[35]

72. In South Asia, experiences from the 2001 Gujarat earthquake, the 2004 Asian Tsunami and flooding in Nepal in 2008, the Indian States of Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Assam during 2007–2009, and Pakistan in 2010, demonstrated that Dalits are frequently the worst affected and also often "systematically excluded from relief and

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[33] See Chris Chapman and Preti Taneja, *Uncertain Refuge, Dangerous Return: Iraq's Uprooted Minorities* (Minority Rights, 2009), p. 9. Available from www.minorityrights.org/download.php?id=690.

[34] *Realizing the Future We Want for All: Report to the Secretary-General*. Available from www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/report.shtml.

[35] International Dalit Solidarity Network, *Equality in aid: Addressing Caste Discrimination in Humanitarian Response* (2013), p. 2.

recovery efforts".[36] The impact of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath on African-American communities was well documented as were deficiencies in the relief and reconstruction efforts. Minorities may be more vulnerable to natural disaster due to the location of their homes in marginal locations, vulnerable occupations, and poor-quality housing. The environmental impact of development mega-projects often has a disproportionate impact on minorities, as demonstrated by the impact of aggro-business projects on Afro-Colombian minorities and their lands and indigenous minorities in the Gambella region of Ethiopa displaced from their lands, as well as the impact on Pygmy communities of the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline in Cameroon — a few of many examples.

H. Governance

73. The Independent Expert provided a submission to the Global Consultation on Governance and the Post-2015 Framework held in South Africa in February 2013[37] in which she highlighted that minorities globally are poorly represented in all levels of government, decision-making bodies and public-sector employment. At the national level, political and administrative frameworks and public-sector structures with responsibilities for development are often staffed by and geared towards majority communities. Good and inclusive governance is essential to ensuring the rights of minorities. Inclusive governance, representative of minorities, ensures that their issues are not neglected and that policies and programmes are developed with their interests in mind. When minorities are excluded from decision-making and public bodies responsible for implementation of development initiatives, it is inevitable that strategies will neglect minorities or lack the specialist information about their situations and needs to ensure that projects are successful and sustainable.

74. The Independent Expert highlighted in her 2012 report to the General Assembly, the fact that efforts to ensure minority rights and equality frequently require States to implement positive measures and approaches, as required by the Declaration. Positive change for disadvantaged minorities can be facilitated by appropriate institutional attention given to minority rights and a policy and programme framework within which to address minority issues. Institutional attention for minority rights is the logical next step from legislation to concrete action for the protection and promotion of minority rights. A key recommendation is that States consider institutional attention for minority rights both as a good governance obligation, and as an essential component of their human rights, equality and non-discrimination commitments.

I. Energy

75. Access to affordable energy is essential for development and yet minority communities are frequently disproportionately affected by "energy poverty" that impacts on all areas of their lives and restricts their opportunities and development. Minority communities often live in remote or poor rural areas that are poorly served by energy infrastructure. Indeed minorities may also be negatively affected by energy-generating projects which take place in the areas in which they live, but from which they do not fully

[36] Ibid. p. 3.

[37] Available from www.worldwewant2015.org/file/328125/download/356499

benefit. A lack of affordable energy impacts on communities in a host of ways: restricting their ability to reform and increase agricultural production; impacting on the ability to undertake entrepreneurial activities; and creating difficulties in providing electricity to enable children to study and clean, healthy options for cooking. The objective of achieving affordable, sustainable energy for all is therefore particularly relevant for minority communities.

76. A 2012 regional Roma survey, revealed that between 70 and 90 per cent of Roma surveyed reported living in conditions of severe material deprivation. Roma settlements frequently lack energy provision, sometimes because they are classified as illegal settlements and do not fall within energy and infrastructure plans. Communities in Bulgaria, visited by the mandate holder in 2011, described paying more for energy from private providers and being unable to afford energy bills owing to lack of employment and low incomes. Key questions must be asked at the national level, which include: who are those most affected by lack of access to affordable energy?

J. Water

77. The Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque, focused her 2012 report to the Council (A/HRC/21/42) on stigmatization in the realization of the rights to water and sanitation. The report examines different manifestations of stigma in the context of the human rights to water and sanitation and explores recommendations for policymaking and solutions to prevent and respond to human rights violations resulting from stigma. The Special Rapporteur found that stigma pushes people to the margins of society and results in the rejection, avoidance and marginalization of certain groups. Access to water and sanitation for many Roma communities is notoriously precarious. Similarly, the report highlights that Dalit habitations are often systematically excluded from service provision.

78. On 30 October 2013, the Friends of Water, UNICEF, the Special Rapporteur and OHCHR issued a press statement calling for the post-2015 development agenda to be framed around the principles of equality and non-discrimination in the context of water and sanitation.[38] The statement called for future goals, targets and indicators to be framed to include an explicit focus on the most marginalized and disadvantaged groups and individuals, including through the use of disaggregated data. "Success" must be assessed in relation to the progress made in closing gaps or inequalities in access to sanitation, water and hygiene. New priorities should focus on the millions of marginalized peoples who have remained hidden within aggregate statistics, and who continue to have no access to basic services.

K. Population dynamics

79. Population dynamics include trends and changes in population growth, migration, urbanization, population density and age structures, and are a core element of the consultations. However, consideration of this area of development rarely addresses inequalities and the dimensions of population associated with majority/minority relations. Trends towards urbanization, for example, are frequently least pronounced for minority

[38] Available from www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Water/JointStatement_NewYork30Oct2013.pdf.

populations resulting in growing rural/urban and majority/minority divides. Birth rates may decrease in increasingly affluent population groups but remain high amongst the poorest, often minority, communities, serving to perpetuate their poverty. In many countries, there are clear geographical boundaries between population groups and equally clear socioeconomic divides between population groups — commonly, minorities fall on the wrong side of such divides.

80. Population dynamics may be deeply affected by discrimination and social exclusion exercised by one population group against another. The dynamics between and across different population groups should therefore also be given greater attention. For example, conflict between communities and enforced population movement due to conflict results in internal displacement that may affect minorities disproportionately and have a greater and longer-term impact on their rights, their access to livelihood, income and basic services. Globally, millions of people are affected by displacement and they are often minorities who are numerically fewer, politically and militarily non-dominant and the most vulnerable to social and political unrest and the impact of conflict. A fundamental message of the Independent Expert is that protection of minority rights and the creation of a culture of minority rights within wider society promotes conditions of stability under which human rights and development crises and setbacks, and huge population impacts, are less likely to occur.

V. Conclusion and recommendations

81. **Equality for minorities is a human right and must be recognized as a core development goal. There are compelling arguments for greater attention being given to disadvantaged minorities in post-2015 development agendas and future development goals. Foremost amongst these is that globally, disadvantaged minorities remain among the poorest and most socially and economically excluded communities. The Independent Expert considers that a real risk exists that many millions of persons belonging to minorities globally will continue to be "left behind" if there is not a clear commitment at the global and national levels to address their plight as a high global development priority.**

82. **Minorities should be among the first targets of development strategies, yet frequently they are among the last. Lack of attention to the situations of minorities constitutes one of the most serious deficiencies in the MDG process and an important impediment to achieving certain goals in some States. Without significant and continuing efforts to raise attention to the need for solutions that work effectively for disadvantaged minorities, post-2015 strategies may continue to follow the same patterns, priorities and models that have proved to be flawed in their ability to address the development needs of disadvantaged minorities.**

83. **The relationship between inequality, discrimination and poverty cannot be ignored or underestimated. Tens of millions of people worldwide are trapped in a cycle of discrimination, exclusion, poverty and underdevelopment from which they cannot break out without targeted attention given to their situations. It is imperative that the United Nations and others, as they move forward to craft a new set of development objectives and targets, addresses the inequalities faced by national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.**

84. **Despite the valuable new attention to inequalities, even within the numerous consultation reports emerging from the process, there is a tendency to place minorities at the end of a long list of disadvantaged groups or ignore them completely. The message that emerges from these high-level documents is that they are a relatively low**

priority in comparison to other inequality issues including gender equality, disability, children and age.

85. The post-2015 framework of new goals should be based on human rights, including minority rights as established in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, and the principles of equality, non-discrimination and participation. A focus on disadvantaged minorities and specific minority groups, including Roma, people of African Descent, Dalits, and disadvantaged religious and linguistic minorities worldwide would potentially bring much needed development attention to millions of the most excluded and impoverished peoples globally.

86. The need for disaggregated data to reveal the inequalities experienced by persons belonging to minority groups remains essential and national efforts to collect and analyse such data should be enhanced and assisted by the international community. Disaggregated data are needed across all goals and in relation to such crucial areas as education, employment, health, and household income. Such data not only allows inequalities to be identified, they assist in the design of appropriate targeted solutions and in the monitoring and evaluation of progress towards achieving goals for minorities.

87. Nevertheless, in the majority of countries where disaggregated data are lacking, Governments, national institutions and development actors, as well as United Nations specialized agencies, are generally well aware of which communities are the most excluded, marginalized and impoverished — frequently disadvantaged minority communities. Consequently, lack of statistical evidence and data must not be used to justify lack of attention to the needs of disadvantaged minority groups.

88. Within the framework of a strong equality-focused goal or goals, it will be crucial to establish specific targets for States on the inclusion of minorities and specific indicators upon which to measure progress. The participation of minorities needs to be ensured and increased in all phases.

89. Targeted affirmative action policies for addressing the economic and social exclusion of minorities, including specific social and economic development plans for marginalized groups and the regions in which they live are required. Where appropriate, dedicated institutional attention should be given to minorities in the States where they live, including through designated ministries, departments or units, focal points, ombudspersons, commissions etc in order for national action plans to be implemented with the necessary attention given to minorities.

90. The international donor community should clearly recognize the need to give attention to disadvantaged minorities and ensure that, at the global level, this is reflected in the process of developing a new set of development goals and in the goals themselves. At the national level, donors should ensure that sufficient resources are provided to States to support their activities and are directed towards projects and programmes meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged minority communities.

91. The Independent Expert urges States to establish independent monitoring bodies with civil society and public participation, including of minorities, to ensure that the next round of commitments made at the global level are fulfilled for minorities.